

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A process for the production of 3 -methylthiopropional which comprises reacting reaction medium comprising methyl mercaptan and acrolein in the presence of a catalyst comprising an organic base characterised in that the organic base is a N-alkyl morpholine compound.
2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1 in which the catalyst is C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>6</sub> alkyl morpholine.
3. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 2 in which the catalyst is methyl morpholine or ethyl morpholine.
4. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 in which the mole ratio of organic base to methyl mercaptan is from 0.0001 to 0.05.
5. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 4 in which the mole ratio of organic base to methyl mercaptan is from 0.001 to 0.01.
6. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 in which the mole ratio of methyl mercaptan to acrolein is from 0.9 to 2.

7. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 6 in which the mole ratio of methyl mercaptan to acrolein is from 1 to 1.2.
8. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 in which the catalyst further comprises an organic acid.
9. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 8 in which the organic acid is selected from formic acid, acetic acid, propanoic acid and butanoic acid.
10. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 9 in which the organic acid is acetic acid.
11. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any of the claims 8 to 10~~ claim 8 in which the mole ratio of catalyst to organic acid is from 0.1 to 2.
12. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 11 in which the mole ratio of catalyst to organic acid is from 0 to 1.
13. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 carried out at a temperature of from 20 to 70°C.
14. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 13 carried out at a temperature of from 30 to 50°C.

15. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in ~~any of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 carried out under atmospheric pressure.
16. (Original) A process for the production of 2-hydroxy-4-(methylthio)butanenitrile which comprises (a) a first step of reacting reaction medium comprising methyl mercaptan and acrolein in the presence of a catalyst comprising an organic base characterised in that the organic base is a N-alkyl morpholine compound to produce a product stream comprising 3-methylthiopropional and said catalyst; and (b) a second step of reacting said product stream with hydrogen cyanide in the presence of a catalyst thereby producing 2-hydroxy-4-(methylthio)butanenitrile.